<u>AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS</u>

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

<u>LISTING OF THE CLAIMS</u>:

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

2. (Original) An electric power steering apparatus comprising:

a ball nut rotationally driven by an electric motor and having a female thread groove formed in the inner periphery thereof;

a rack shaft disposed through said ball nut on the axis thereof and having a male thread groove so formed in its outer periphery as to face to the female thread groove;

a plurality of circulation balls interposed between the female thread groove and the male thread groove;

a housing for holding said ball nut rotatably; and

a fastening element for fixing said nut to said housing,

wherein said electric power steering apparatus is provided with fall-out preventing means for preventing

3

said fastening element from falling out within said housing.

3. (Original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said housing is constructed of a first housing accommodating said ball nut and said fastening element, and a second housing fixed to said first housing, and

said fall-out preventing means is a fastening element contact member, formed on said second housing, for regulating said fastening element from moving in the fall-out direction.

4. (Original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said fastening element is a stopper ring fitted to said first housing, and

an interval between said stopper ring and said fastening element contact member is, in an assembled state, set smaller than a thickness of said stopper ring.

5. (Original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said fastening

element is a ring bolt helically fitted to said first
housing, and

an interval between said ring bolt and said
fastening element contact member is, in an assembled
state, set smaller than an effective helical-fitting
length of said ring bolt to said first housing.

Claims 6-8 (Cancelled)